

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

Claims 20-49 were originally presented for consideration in this divisional application after canceling claims 1-19 and 50-90 by preliminary amendment.

The examiner's indication that claims 25, 34 and 42-49 contain allowable subject matter is noted with appreciation.

The following rejections, objections, and requirements were set forth in the Office Action:

1. Claims 20-24, 26-33 and 35-41 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,056,059 to Ohmer;
2. Claims 25, 34 and 42-49 are objected to for depending from a rejected base claim, but are otherwise allowable; and
3. A requirement is made for a new title indicative of the claimed invention.

Regarding the requirement for a new title, the above amendment to the specification provides a title which is more indicative of the claimed invention.

Regarding the objections to claims 25, 34 and 42-49, the above amendments to the claims rewrite claims 25, 34, 42, 43 and 49 in independent form. Therefore, claims 25, 34 and 42-49 are now in condition for allowance.

Regarding the anticipation rejections of claims 20-24, 26-33 and 35-41, note that independent claim 20 has been amended above. Claim 20 now contains the limitation that the drift forced through the leg of the wellbore junction has a substantially circular cross-section transverse to a direction of displacement of the drift. This amendment to claim 20 is similar to the amendments made to certain of the independent claims in the parent of this divisional application. The Ohmer reference does not describe this feature of the invention now recited in claim 20, and so the examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejections of claim 20 and its dependents.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, all of the claims pending in this application are now seen to be in a condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance of claims 20-49 is therefore earnestly solicited.

The examiner is hereby requested to telephone the undersigned attorney of record at (972) 516-0030 if such would expedite the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450,

on DECEMBER 22, 2004
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